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NATIONAL PUBLICITY BILL ORGANIZATION

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MINUTES OF FIRST MEETING

IN WASHINGTON, D. C.

AND AN

ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC.

GLOBE PRINTING COMPANY
Washington, D. C.

1902

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National Publicity Bill Organization.

The first meeting of the National Organization to secure the enforced publicity of election contributions and expenditures in national campaigns was held in the New Willard Hotel, Washington, D. C., on Wednesday, January 17th, 1906, at 11 A. M. in pursuance of the following call:

"PUBLICITY BILL ORGANIZATION.

1301 Sixteenth St.,

Washington, D. C.,

December 30, 1905.

Dear Sir:

In obedience to the request of a majority of the members I take pleasure in informing you that a meeting of the Publicity Bill Organization will be held at the New Willard Hotel, Washington, D. C., on Wednesday, January the 17th, 1906, at 11 A. M. Your attendance is earnestly desired.

Very truly yours,

PERRY BELMONT.

Chairman."

There was a well attended and influential gathering, among those present being:

General James H. Wilson, Wilmington, Del.

W. B. Thompson, Dover, Del.

Hon. D. L. W. Granger, M. C., Rhode Island.

Samuel Gompers, President American Federation of Labor.

Hon. Claude A. Swanson, Gov. Elect of Va.

Hon. Samuel W. McCall, M. C., Massachusetts.

Hon. W. E. Chandler, former U. S. Senator from New Hampshire.

Hon. Charles A. Towne, M. C., New York, representing T. T. Hudson, Member of Dem. National Committee Minnesota.

Norman E. Mack, of Buffalo, N. Y., member of National Democratic Committee.

Attorney General Julius Mayer of New York.

J. G. Schurman, President Cornell University, New York.

Charles A. Gardiner, Chairman of Law Committee of the Board of Regents, of New York State.

John T. Dunlap of New York.

James Wilson, President of the Pattern Makers National Union, New York.

Frank K. Foster, Chairman of Legislative Committee of Massachusetts Federation of Labor, Delegate of the American Federation of Labor to the British Trade Union Congress.

Cromwell Gibbons, Jacksonville, Fla.

Hon. Hannis Taylor, Alabama, former Minister to Spain.

Hon. John E. Lamb, Terre Haute, Ind.

Hon. John T. McGraw, Grafton, West Va., Member of Democratic National Committee.

Hon. Alex Troup, Connecticut.

Hon. Chas. S. Hamlin, Massachusetts.

Van L. Polk, Tennessee.

Hon. Urey Woodson, Member Democratic National Committee, Owensboro, Ky.

Hon. Perry Belmont, of New York, in calling the meeting to order spoke as folows:—The bill of which copies have been placed in your hands has been introduced

GIFT
MRS. WOODROW WILSON
NOV. 25, 1939

in the House by Representative McCall, of Massachusetts, and in the Senate by Senator Patterson, of Colorado, and is a measure of self-regulation and self-protection, an evolutionary development growing out of our own political system. It is a Publicity Bill not a Corrupt Practice Bill. The English act of 1883 is a creditable piece of legislation, but it is only during the actual period of parliamentary elections its wholesome restrictions are effective upon candidates and their agents. Party funds are very large and are expended lavishly by party organizations and their adherents, political contributions taking the form of what is known as "subscriptions," made before a parliamentary candidacy is actually announced.

American politics are not more corrupt than the politics of other countries. The contrary is true. But we want them better still. The rapid strides in wealth, with all their benefits, have naturally created certain disadvantages. The great captains of industry have been induced or compelled, or they have permitted themselves on one pretext or another to endeavor to control political agencies and organizations by the use of money. The time has now come to check this growing tendency. Many who are active in political organizations unite in this conviction. Members of the national committees of the two dominant parties are enrolled in our organization. Their practical experience leads them to favor the form of publicity required by the proposed law. Organized labor is energetically demanding it. The presence of Mr. Gompers and other labor representatives is sufficient evidence of this fact.

National committees established by national conventions, not recognized by the Constitution, have grown from small and temporary agencies to permanent and powerful instrumentalities, receiving and spending vast sums in complete secrecy. The proposed law would not interfere directly or indirectly with the election laws of any state. Limited

in its effect to the requirement of the publication of campaign contributions and expenditures by the national and congressional committees, it does not invade the rights and functions of any state political committee. The law would make campaign money public money.

With this brief reference to the bill may I be permitted to call your attention to the representative character of this assemblage, adding new impetus to an already strong national movement. The influential representation from Delaware is especially encouraging in view of conditions within its borders, as is the co-operation of Representative Granger, of Rhode Island, and the important labor enrollment from that state. Rhode Island, whose sons have so often and so brilliantly served their flag and country, will follow the example of Massachusetts and of Connecticut in an effective publicity law to rid herself of the dead weight of mere money domination.

We have met to exchange views and to consult as to what further steps should be taken to promote the legislation we have in view. With its general scope you are all familiar, and I now refer this important subject to you to be dealt with as best accords with your judgement.

At the close of Mr. Belmont's remarks, MR. CHANDLER said:—I wish to tender personal thanks to Mr. Belmont for having originated this movement and for having published his admirable article in the North American Review. As we as members of this Committee are gathered together for the first time, I think it is advisable that we should make a formal organization. I therefore have prepared some resolutions, which I will read.

After the reading of the resolutions, Mr. Samuel Gompers with the concurrence of Mr. Chandler moved to amend the resolutions by declaring the object of the Association to be to "eliminate" instead of "reduce" as at first suggested, the evils arising from the expenditure of large sums of money in political elections.

On motion of Gen. James H. Wilson of Delaware a sentence was added providing for securing organizations in each state with similar purposes in view.

As thus amended the resolutions were unanimously adopted as follows:

"*Resolved,* by the National Publicity Bill Organization, at its first meeting, at the New Willard Hotel, in Washington, on January 17th, 1906, That the organization approve the action hitherto taken by Hon. Perry Belmont in originating this organization, in arousing public attention to the object to be promoted, and in preparing a bill for submission to Congress; and that the organization be now formally completed for the purpose of eliminating by all appropriate methods the evils which result from the expenditure of large sums of money in political elections; the object of the Committee being to secure the passage of an act of Congress providing for publicity in the receipts and expenditures of the national committees of all political parties, and to promote the formation of local organizations for eliminating such evils in the various States and Territories."

"*Resolved,* That the Chairman of this Organization be authorized to appoint an Executive Committee, of which he shall be the head, and such other committees as he shall deem necessary to act for and in the name of the Organization on all suitable occasions."

"*Resolved,* that Perry Belmont be and hereby is elected permanent President of the Organization.

Mr. Belmont took the chair as permanent presiding officer and thanked the members for this mark of their appreciation, promising to do all he could to further the objects of the Organiaztion.

Mr. Samuel Gompers moved that the Organization proceed to the election of a Secretary, and nominated Mr. Frank K. Foster, of Massachusetts, Chairman of the Legislative Committee of the Massachusetts Federation of Labor.

Mr. Foster was unanimously chosen and took his place as Secretary of the meeting.

A list of members forming the organization was presented and was read by the Secretary as follows:

National Publicity Bill Organization

LIST OF MEMBERS

Perry Belmont, New York.
Joseph W. Folk, Governor of Missouri.
J. Frank Hanly, Governor of Indianna.
A. J. Montague, Governor of Virginia.
A. B. Cummins, Governor of Iowa.
N. C. Blanchard, Governor of Louisiana.
Louis Warfield, Governor of Maryland.
W. M. O. Dawson, Governor of West Virginia.
William D. Jenks, Governor of Alabama.
Saml. W. Pennypacker, Governor of Pennsylvania.
Geo. E. Chamberlain, Governor of Oregon.
Claude A. Swanson, Governor-Elect of Virginia.
Grover Cleveland, former President of the United States.
Alton B. Parker, former Chief Justice Court of Appeals, New York.
Wm. J. Bryan, Nebraska.
Frank H. Black, former Governor of New York.
L. F. C. Garvin, former Governor of Rhode Island.
Saml. Gompers, Pres. American Federation of Labor, New York.
Chas. W. Eliot, President Harvard University, Massachusetts.
Edward A. Alderman, President University of Virginia.
W. H. P. Faunce, Pres. Brown University, Rhode Island.
Henry Hopkins, Pres. Williams College, Massachusetts.
J. G. Schurman, Pres. Cornell University, New York.
William Dew Hyde, Pres. Bowdoin College, Maine.
Ira Remsen, Pres. John Hopkins University, Maryland.
E. Benjamin Andrews, Pres. Nebraska University.
George Harris, Pres. Amherst College, Massachusetts.

M. W. Stryker, Pres. Hamilton College, New York.

James A. Tate, Pres. American University, Tennessee.

Geo. L. Collie, Pres. Beloit College, Wisconsin.

J. H. Kirkland, Chancellor Vanderbilt University, Tennessee.

David S. Jordan, Pres. Leland Stanford, Jr., University, California.

Chas. H. Levermore, Pres. Adelphi College, New York.

M. H. Chamberlain, Pres. McKendree College, Lebanon, Ill.

Lorenzo J. Osborn, Pres. Des Moines College, Iowa.

Stephen F. Weston, Pres. Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

Chas. Noble Gregory, Dean of Law College, Iowa State University, Iowa City.

W. L. Ward, New York, Member Republican National Committee.

Norman E. Mack, New York, Member Democratic National Committee.

Wm. E. Chandler, former Secretary of the Navy, New Hampshire.

James K. Jones, former Chairman Democratic National Committee, Arkansas.

John Wanamaker, former Post-Master General, Pennsylvania.

Oscar S. Strauss, former Minister to Turkey, New York.

Chas. E. Hughes, Counsel to New York Legislative Insurance Investigating Committee.

Julius M. Mayer, Attorney-General of New York.

Warner Miller,former U. S. Senator from New York.

John M. Thurston, former U. S. Senator from Nebraska. ,

Wm. F. Vilas, former Postmaster-General, Wisconsin.

Everett Colby, State Senator-Elect, New Jersey.

August Belmont, Treasurer Democratic National Committee, New York.

Melville E. Ingalls, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Judson E. Harmon, former U. S. Atty. Genl., Ohio.

John E. Lamb, former member of Congress from Indiana.

J. W. Kern, former candidate for Governor of Indiana.

T. M. Patterson, U. S. Senator from Colorado.

Clark Howell, Member Democratic National Committee from Georgia.

Carter Harrison, former Mayor of Chicago.

Josiah Quincy, Boston, Massachusetts.

Roger C. Sullivan, Member Democratic National Committee from Illinois.

Alexander Troup, New Haven, Connecticut.

Chas. A. Gardiner, Chairman Law Committee, of the Board of Regents, N. Y. State.

Andrew Carnegie, Pennsylvania.

John F. Dillon, former Judge, New York.

John T. McGraw, Member Democratic National Committee from West Virginia.

D. L. D. Granger, Member of Congress from Rhode Island.

James H. Wilson, Wilmington, Del.

John G. Milburn, New York.

W. F. Harrity, former Chairman Democratic National Committee, Pennsylvania.

Henry Watterson, Editor of Louisville Courier Journal, Kentucky.

Melville E. Stone, New York.

W. B. Vandiver, Superintendent Insurance, Missouri.

R. R. Kenney, Member Democratic National Committee from Delaware.

Edward Lauterbach, Member of New York State Board of Regents.

J. J. Willett, former Judge, Alabama.

John Ford, former State Senator, New York.

Hermann Ridder, Publisher Staatz-Zeitung, New York.

J. Hampden Robb, former State Senator from New York.

D. N. Lockwood, Buffalo, New York.

Geo. Haven Putnam, Publisher, New York City.

Frances Lynde Stetson, New York City.

J. H. Clarke, Cleveland, Ohio.

B. B. Smalley, Member Democratic National Committee from Vermont.

R. B. Van Courtlandt, New York City.
William Sulzer, Member of Congress from New York.
Chas. W. Knapp, St. Louis, Missouri.
P. H. Quinn, Member Democratic National Committee from Rhode Island.
J. B. Sullivan, Des Moines, Iowa.
Chas. S. Hamlin, Boston, Massachusetts.
Eugene S. Ives, Tucson, Arizona.
Cromwell Gibbons, Jacksonville, Florida.
W. R. Nelson, Kansas City, Missouri.
Frank K. Foster, Massachusetts Federation of Labor.
P. J. McCarthy, Providence, Rhode Island.
P. S. Grosscup, U. S. Circuit Judge, Illinois.
James M. Lynch, Pres. International Typographical Union, Indiana.
John Y. Terry, Member Democratic National Committee from State of Washington.
John W. Blodgett, Member Republican National Committee from Michigan.
J. M. Greene, Member Republican National Committee from South Dakota.
W. A. Coakley, General President International Lithographers & Press Feeders Association, New York.
J. A. Springer, National Organizer United Mine Workers, West Virginia.
Park Mitchell, former President New Hampshire State Federation of Labor.
Timothy Healy, Pres. International Brotherhood of Stationary Firemen, New York.
John Nugent, Pres. W. Va., State Federation of Labor.
Wm. A. Gaston, Member Democratic National Committee from Massachusetts.
Hoke Smith, former Secretary of the Interior.
Wm. J. Wallace, U. S. Circuit Judge, Albany, New York.
J. K. Richards, U. S. Circuit Judge, Cincinnatti, Ohio.
Horace H. Lurton, U. S. Circuit Judge, Nashville, Tennessee.
James G. Jenkins, U. S. Circuit Judge, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
L. E. McComas, Judge Court of Appeals, Washington, D. C.

A. M. Stevenson, Member Republican National Commitee, Denver, Colorado.

Urey Woodson, Member Democratic National Committee, Owensboro, Kentucky.

H. S. Cummings, Member Democratic National Committee, Stamford, Conn.

T. E. Ryan, Member Democratic National Committee, Waukesha, Wisconsin.

Frederick V. Holman, Member Democratic National Committee, Portland, Oregon.

T. T. Hudson, Member Democratic National Committee, Duluth, Minnesota.

Henry B. Thompson, former Chairman Republican State Committee, Wilmington, Delaware.

Henry T. Kent, St. Louis, Missouri.

Martin Maginnis, President Soldiers Home, Helena, Montana.

E. E. Clark, Chief Order Railroad Conductors, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

John T. Wilson, Pres. of Maintainance of Way Employees, St. Louis, Missouri.

Robert C. Houston, Georgetown, Delaware.

James Wilson, Pres. National Pattern Makers' Union, New York.

Louis Wiley, New York.

Joseph Daniels, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Thos. C. McClellan, Albany, New York.

Hannis Taylor, Alabama, former Minister to Spain.

D. R. Francis, St. Louis, Missouri.

Crammond Kennedy, Washington, D. C.

THE CHAIRMAN stated that he had a number of letters before him, but unless the meeting desired them to be read they would be printed.

It was so ordered.

MR. NORMAN E. MACK, of Buffalo: I do not know of any State in the Union that will stand more in favor of these resolutions than the State of New York. We have as much reason as any other State for favoring the measure. I cannot imagine how any man can be opposed to it. The Bill

speaks for itself. We are all familiar with what has been going on in the use of money in State, local and national campaigns. We all know that it is not only a menace to the country, but to political parties themselves. The State of New York will stand back of the measure almost unanimously. Any man either in the upper or lower House opposing or voting against this measure will be looked upon with great curiosity and is likely to have his picture taken.

MR. CHANDLER: Can you tell us the condition of the Bill in the New York Legislature?

THE CHAIRMAN: Notwithstanding it was introduced very late in the session it passed the State Senate and the Judiciary and Rules Committees of the Assembly, but failed to pass the latter body on account of an immaterial amendment which, however, had the effect of preventing its going back to the Senate before the final adjournment.

MR. MACK, of New York: It was introduced again last Monday. I am inclined to think from what I heard the Bill will pass in its present form or very nearly so. Personally I am very much in favor of this measure you have under consideration. Money enough can be raised for campaign purposes without contributing a hundred thousand dollars at a time. A man can contribute five thousand dollars and have it printed that he has done so and no one will object. But when money is paid over, a hundred thousand dollars at a crack, as has been done recently by some of our corporations, the time has come when the public won't take to it very kindly. As far as the State of New York is concerned, I think I am justified in stating the sentiment is as strong in favor of the proposed legislation as in any other State in the Union. I have in my hand a list of Labor Organizations in the State of New York which have endorsed the Publicity Bill, which I will ask the Secretary to read.

THE SECRETARY read as follows:

The following central labor bodies in the State of New York have by resolution indorsed the Publicity Bill: Central Federated Union of Manhattan, Central Labor Union of New York, New York Typographical Union (No. 6), Pattern Makers' Association of New York City and vicinity, Trades Assembly of Poughkeepsie, Trades Assembly of Fort Edward, Central Labor Union of Ticonderoga, Central Federation of Labor of Troy, Trades Assembly of Utica, Central Trades and Labor Council of Rochester, Central Labor Union of Batavia, Central Labor Union of Geneva, Trades Assembly, of Ballston, Spa., Central Labor Council, of Jamestown, Central Labor Union, of Binghamton, Central Labor Union of Middletown, Hod Carriers and Building Laborer's Union of Utica.

MR. SCHURMAN, of Cornell University: I hold in my hand a document giving an interview with Hon. Seth Low, of New York, in relation to a similar reform movement with which it seems to me this might come into collision. Mr. Low, as Chairman of the Committee, appointed in connection with the movement to obtain purity of elections says, that this bill of ours is based on the Massachusetts Statute and adds, "Our information is that neither in Massachusetts nor in Connecticut have laws of this kind been of practical value."

THE CHAIRMAN: It speaks well for the success of our movement that there should be rivalry in the effort to establish organizations such as we have formed. Mr. Low evidently had not carefully read the Publicity Bill at the time he was interviewed. He assumes certain provisions to be there which are not there, or at least are not open to the interpretation he places upon them. He also omits to consider the provisions for the enforcement of the proposed law, which do not exist in the Massachusetts or Connecticut Statutes. It is rather surprising that Mr. Low is quoted as declaring that those laws are ineffective in Massachusetts

and Connecticut. I do not know whether, having been President of Columbia University, he would be willing to follow Professor Eliot, of Harvard, in the contrary opinion. I would rather take the testimony of Representative McCall, of Massachusetts, who has been a pioneer in this form of legislation and first introduced the Massachusetts Bill in1889. He is prepared to say to Congress that the law has proved very beneficial and effective in his State. The Massachusetts law was enacted in 1892, and has been amended from time to time since then. Our Publicity Bill was drafted under very favorable auspices by a very strong law committee. I think it is a fortunate circumstance that Mr. Low's association would be willing to aid this movement. We confine ourselves to the simple proposition of Publicity. Judge Gray, of Delaware, says of the effectiveness of such legislation:

"Compelled publicity as to contributions and campaign expenses will be more efficient than all the Corrupt Practice Acts put together, towards suppressing the evil of electoral corruption. It will work automatically, and require no legal machinery of pains and penalties to enforce it. I mean that when the publicity is once enforced, the beneficial results flow automatically, without the intervention of penal legislation."

While upon this subject I wish to refer to a letter just received from Mr. Knapp, of the *St. Louis Republic.* He says:

"The Missouri statute requiring all public officials to make returns showing contributions received and the names of the persons making the contributions has been in effective operation for several years without eliciting any condemnatory criticism. The law has been of salutory benefit here and I have no doubt that a similar enactment by Congress, which would assure the same sort of publicity all over the country, would be of great benefit in preventing such scandals as the insurance investigation has disclosed."

The Governor of Missouri sends us the following telegram:

"Jefferson City, Mo., Jan. 16th, 1906—Appreciate your invitation very much but will be impossible for me to go there before Boston appointment. You have my best wishes for the success of the movement which I regard as of great importance and shall be glad to do anything that I can help it along. (Signed) Jos. W. Folk."

There are fourteen States in which there are similar laws. The movement here to-day will unquestionably tend to arouse public sentiment and to make them more effective.

MR. SCHURMAN: I think the members will agree with me that it was well I brought this subject forward so as to elicit the statement which the Chairman has made with so much perspicacity. I only regretted that in the State of New York a Committee composed of such representative men of action should throw doubt upon the efficacy of the measure to which we are committed. I think the remarks of the Chairman will dispel that doubt.

MR. CHANDLER: Now, as to the order of business to be adopted. The name "Publicity" given to this Committee seems to make its main object the eliminating of the evils through publicity, but we have certainly enlarged the scope of the Committee by the amendments we have added to it. It seems to me there are two subjects to be considered.

1. Whether the present Bill is in the main a sound bill or whether it needs amendment.

2. Then what else shall the Committee undertake to do by way of getting rid of the evils of much money spending.

But we certainly ought, while this meeting lasts, to see whether this present Bill substantially represents our views.

GEN. WILSON, of Delaware: It seems to me Mr. Chandler has accurately stated the most important question for us to consider is the perfecting of this measure. I have read Mr. Chandler's analysis and it has raised a serious doubt in my mind as to the efficacy of this measure. I rise

for the purpose of asking him—he is a master of this business—if in his judgment this Bill is already up to the full measure of drastic provisions within the limitations of the Constitution, that could be devised by a skilled and astute lawyer.

MR. CHANDLER: Passing those two qualifications over to the gentleman himself, I will answer him that this Bill was drawn by gentlemen designated for the purpose by Mr. Belmont. The first feature I noticed was that it was limited to national purposes—the securing of publicity to contributions given in aid of a National Committee. A National Committee is defined as a Committee designed to influence elections in two or more States. The intention is to apply this provision to National Committees, expecting that the States will apply their own remedies. Now, is that all this Committee ought to do?

MR. WILSON, of Delaware: Mr. Chandler knows there is great ingenuity displayed by the average politician in getting around the law. So it seems to me we should aim to make this Bill as broad as possible. and endeavor to have a series of Bills to supplement its provisions passed as soon as possible by the State Legislatures. Therefore I move that a Committee be appointed by the Chairman to frame an address to the country explaining the objects of this Association.

The motion was adopted.

MR. GRANGER, of Rhode Island: In my opinion Mr. Chairman, there are many men in Rhode Island of both political parties who will be in favor of this bill. The State of Rhode Island has suffered perhaps more in proportion to its size than any other State from the evil this bill is intended to reach, but I should regret to see this bill limited to National Committees. In Rhode Island we hardly know there is such a thing as a National Committee for the election of Members of Congress.

MR. TOWNE, of New York: Would not this be met by saying, "Any Committee which concerns itself with the election of Members of Congress?"

MR. GRANGER: If it could be enlarged in this way I think it would be of great value. I am sure the effect of this action on my State will be great.

MR. MACK, of New York: Where money is distributed in States it is not done by the National Committees. The money is usually paid over to the Chairman of each State Committee and by him distributed. So there would be no trouble in evading the law.

THE CHAIRMAN: Cannot the States be relied upon to enact laws to meet this condition?

MR. MACK: I am afraid not.

THE CHAIRMAN: On the other hand, if we drew a bill in this broad way it would be very difficult to get it through Congress. The objection would be made that the proposed federal law might be extended so as to be an interference with State election laws and State regulations.

MR. MACK: I think you are right about that.

MR. CROMWELL GIBBONS, of Florida: I suggest in reply to the remarks of the gentleman from New York (Mr. Mack) in regard to the National Committee turning over money to the State Committee for distribution, that even that state of affairs could be reached by publication which would start an inquiry as to what the money was used for. In my own State the main source of corruption is through the primaries. As much as a hundred thousand dollars has been paid to elect a U. S. Senator or a Congressman. People who accept $5, $10 or $100 a day to work at the polls would not accept it if there was danger of its being made public. I believe we could enact a primary law to carry out the features of the bill if it should pass.

THE CHAIRMAN: Have you any doubt if this Bill were passed, that there would follow the enactment of similar laws by your State?

MR. GIBBONS: I have no doubt if this Bill were passed that we could secure the adoption of a modification of it by the State, with the support of this organization, so as to affect the primaries.

MR. LAMB, of Indiana: The action of the committee meets my hearty approval. I think it is not so much the distribution of money as the collection of money that we should strike at. The object of this movement is to prevent the giving of money,—not the distribution. The danger is in trying to do too much. In the first place this Bill gives the corporation that does not want to contribute an excuse for not giving and a majority of them, in my opinion, are practically coerced into giving—blackmailed, in fact. In the second place, to those corporations who want to give, it furnishes a menace. Corporations who want to give money do not want it published because if publication is made, the object of giving the money fails. Therefore I am in favor of not going too far. If the National Legislature blazes the way, the States will follow. Let us not in any way give rise to suspicion that we intend to interfere with the States. (Applause).

MR. THOMPSON, of Delaware: The reflex action of the work of this association is unquestionably going to help us in our various States. In Delaware, with a voting population of less than 50,000, we have two U. S. Senatorships. The Legislature is controlled by about two-fifths of our voting population. You can see very easily no better field for fraud exists. We need such organizations as this and feel we are under your wing. We see the necessity of the two working together.

MR. MCGRAW, of West Virginia, moved that the consideration of the several bills now pending in Congress and such other bills as may be introduced be referred to a Law Committee to be appointed by the Chairman, they to report to the full Committee. He remarked that if

they were able to secure National Legislation, it seemed to him that such legislation would force State legislation.

THE CHAIRMAN: I understand that we are to have an Executive Committee, a Committee to prepare an Address, and a Law Committee.

MR. GOMPERS: I desire to state that I am very much interested in any species of legislation to arouse the public conscience against the evils resulting from the use and abuse of money in our elections. And of all the people who suffer from that cause, there are none who feel it more acutely than do the wage earners of America, for, apart from our general interest as citizens of our common country, we also have special interests as wage earners who have emerged from old conditions of servitude to a full condition of enfranchisement and manhood, and who have too long been denied recognition of the rights accorded to all other people. The use of money, particularly to the extent it has been used in the last decade, has made it practically impossible for a wage earner to become a member of either State Legislature or the Congress of the United States. I am sure every one who knows me will acquit me of the thought that I have my own personality in view. As a matter of reminiscence I may mention that I have twice declined nominations to the State Legislature of New York, which carried with them the certainty of election. But I do say that it is a strange commentary upon the course of affairs in our country that in the Congress of the United States there is not one man who has been elected as a wage earner. Only yesterday morning we saw in the public prints in the cable dispatches from the other side that eighteen working men, as working men, had been elected to the House of Commons.

A MEMBER: Twenty-six this morning.

MR. GOMPERS: So much the better. I have not yet seen the morning papers. This, in spite of the fact that

members of the British Parliament receive neither fees nor salary, but the workingmen have gone down into their pockets and voluntarily contributed to the support of the men they elected so they may live in the ordinary customary way that workingmen live generally. I do not attach great importance to legislation from Congress in affecting the economic condition of the working people. I do not regard it as of paramount importance. But if we can obtain relief from onerous conditions, from old conceptions, if we can obtain absolute equality before the law I think we shall ask but little more. We are interested with you and will do all we can to aid this movement. But may I request that when the Chairman makes up his Committees and appoints officers of the Association he will please not enumerate me as one of them? I do not know that he would do me that honor, but my onerous duties would not permit my acceptance. I give you my assurance, however, that I will use my best endeavors to make the purposes of this Association a success.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am very sorry that Mr. Gompers has decided he cannot serve on our Executive Committee, for I certainly should have asked him. It will be of great help to us if he can find some satisfactory way of co-operating with us, unofficially, of course, and I think if the speech he has just made can be given publicity it would be of great assistance.

MR. GOMPERS: I have no objection at all.

MR. ALEXANDER TROUP, of Connecticut: I agree with Mr. Mack,. I believe if we can get this law on the statute book for its moral effect then we can go down into State organizations. I am very much in sympathy with this movement. I think we should all concentrate on one point. First get the national law and then go forward and incorporate it into our State Legislation, for the bane of all this thing at the bottom is in our municipal legislation.

MR. GIBBONS, of Florida: Let me suggest that each member of this organization constitute himself a committee of one to communicate with his Representatives in Congress and Senate.

With the modification that this action be deferred until the Law Committee had made its report to the full Committee this suggestion was adopted.

On motion of General Wilson, of Delaware, the meeting then adjourned, subject to the call of the Chairman.

ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC.

National Publicity Bill Organization,
Washington, D. C., Jan. 27, 1906.

For the purpose of eliminating by all appropriate methods the evils resulting from secret contributions and expenditures of large sums of money in elections, a meeting was held in the city of Washington, January 17, 1906, an association was formed known as the National Publicity Bill Organization, and this address was authorized.

"The secret and corrupt use of money in the election of the Chief Magistrate of a nation, its legislators, and its State and municipal officers is a dangerous menace to the institutions of a free people. The profligate use of money for such purposes enables the consolidated interests, by secret contributions, to dominate political organizations, depriving the many of their political rights to confer them on the few.

"It is confidently asserted that the first and most important measure of relief is the passage of a national law, requiring the disclosure, under oath, of every contribution of money and every promise of money in national campaigns, and in case of evasion, providing for exposure, detention, and punishment, substantially as set forth in a bill prepared under the auspices of this Organization.

"This Organization desires to promote the formation of similar organizations in every State of the Union, in order that the proposed national law may be supplemented by State

legislation of like character and as nearly uniform as possible. This movement has the support of leading representative men of the political parties and of organized labor. It concerns the rights and honor of every citizen, and the approval and active co-operation of all are earnestly invoked to carry this reform to a successful conclusion."

(Signed) "PERRY BELMONT,
"Of New York, President.

"FRANK K. FOSTER,
"Of Massachusetts, Secretary."

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